

FROM THE UPPER SEA TO THE LOWER SEA

STUDIES ON THE HISTORY OF ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA IN HONOUR OF A.K. GRAYSON

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IL-YADA' AND SARGON'S SOUTHEAST FRONTIER

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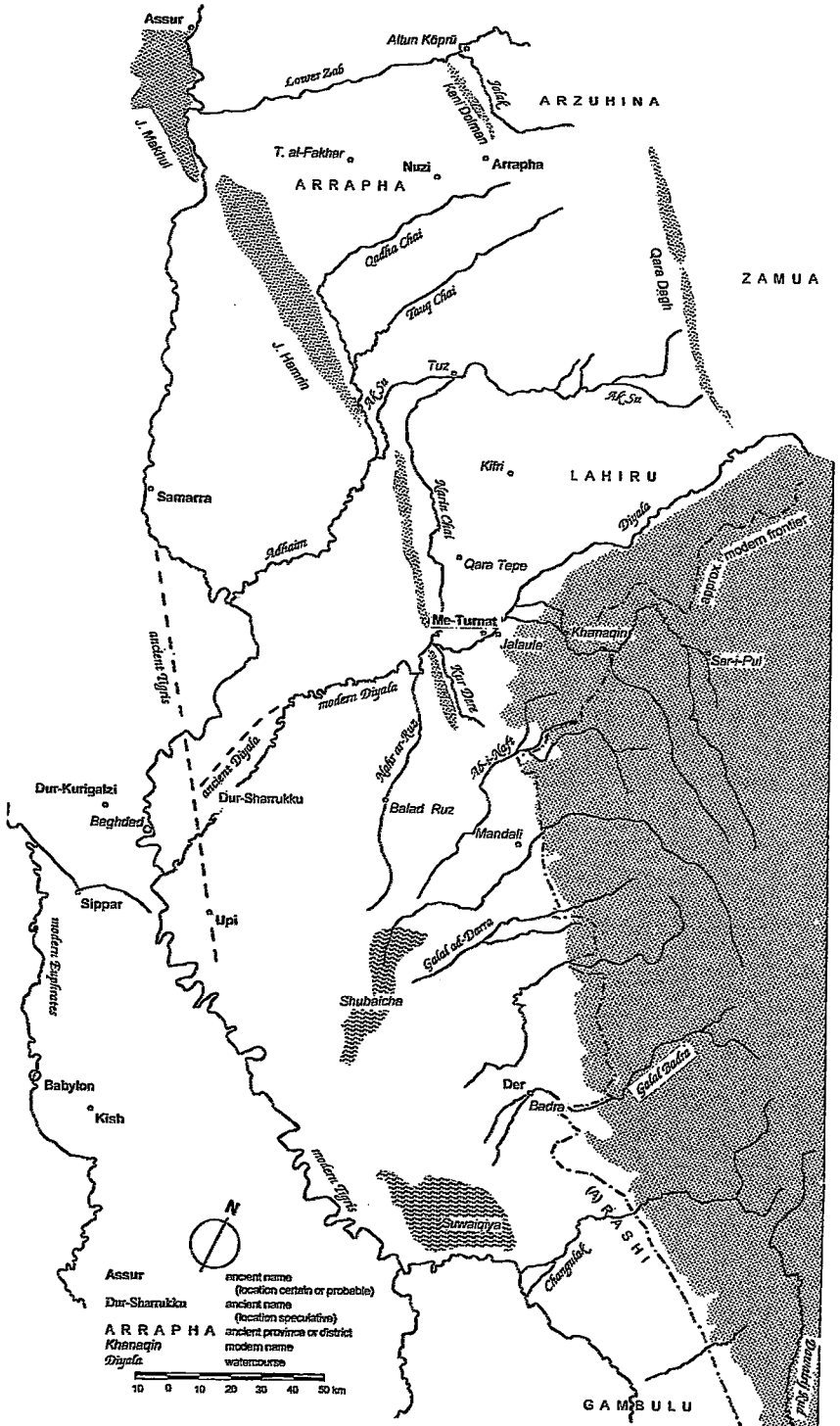
For the historian of ancient Mesopotamia the correspondence of kings is at once a delight and a frustration. To have original documents as an alternative to the official pronouncements of the kings is a delight; trying to reassemble them into a coherent sequence of events is a frustration. Assumptions have to be made about the context of each letter, and about how the events alluded to might fit into our imperfect record of political history at the time. Even when the text is intact, and the names of author and recipient known, the absence of a date makes the whole process hazardous, and the temptation to weave an entire dossier into the framework of known events may generate an inverted pyramid of mere possibilities which can be undermined by a single hard fact at a moment's notice. One way to control the process is to concentrate on a single figure and try to define his role, so reassembling at least one patch in the jigsaw.¹

Il-yada'

The *kudurru* VA 209 (copy: Messerschmidt, VAS 1 no. 70; edition: Peiser, KB 4, 158–65) records three consecutive legal episodes, identified in each case by the Assyrian regnal year. The first is ascribed to the 3rd year of Shalmaneser V, King of Assyria (724/3 B.C.), and also to the time of *Il-yada'*, “governor of the land of Der” (¹DINGIR-*ia-da-a'* LÚ.GAR KUR BÀD.AN^{ki}). The text is dated 16 Ayyaru, at Der, and the note “Finger-nail of Ina-ešīti-ētir instead of his seal” (ii 25–6) demonstrates that the text was taken from an original clay tablet (though probably not verbatim, as the introductory regnal date seems unlikely to have been given in that form on the original tablet). The second episode is ascribed to the 1st year of Sargon, King of Assyria (ii 28), and the third to his 11th year (v 4); month and day are not given. The regnal datings show that the city of Der acknowledged Assyrian sovereignty in 724/3, in 721/0 “just before the celebrated battle in 720” (Brinkman, *Studies Oppenheim*, 13 n. 42), and again in 711/0 before Sargon's 710 campaign against Merodach-baladan. As for *Il-yada'*, it is possible that he was still governor on the two later occasions but this is unfortunately not explicitly stated.

A man called *Il-yada'* also features in the correspondence of Sargon II recovered from the palaces at Nineveh. He is himself the author of several letters, but he is also mentioned by other

¹ The writers first looked together at the correspondence of *Il-yada'* almost 2 decades ago. The majority of the historical and geographical content of the present article has been written by Postgate, while Mattila contributed material on the prosopography (especially Nabû-bēlu-ka'ḥin) and from S. Parpola's editions of the letters in the SAA archive. The imminent appearance of these editions in Fuchs and Parpola, SAA 15 has made it unnecessary to give the justificatory textual citations which would otherwise have been needed. We are very grateful to Prof. Parpola for his generosity in allowing us to use his editions and to Dr. Fuchs for providing us with a draft of his wide-ranging introduction to the volume. While our reconstructions of the course of events may not always coincide with his, it would require too much space to debate every issue, and the reader is urged to consult Fuchs and Parpola, SAA 15 as well. [December 2003: The text was completed in January 2001. Subsequently some of the same material has been discussed by S. Parpola in his edition of *ABL* 1335+ (S. Parpola, “A Letter to Sennacherib Referring to the Conquest of Bit-Ha'iri and Other Events of the Year 693,” in *Fs Dietrich*, 559–80), in which some of the correspondence of Šamaš-bēlu-ušur is assigned to 693 BC. In a few instances we have inserted references to his discussion, but the reader is also urged to consult the entire article.]



correspondents of the king. There are no dates on these letters, and although they refer to known persons and places, the events they mention are not easy to identify. The assumption that each Il-yada' is one and the same person rests partly on the rarity of the name,² and partly on the fact that the author of the letters is active in the Der region, although a formal association with Der is not made explicit in any of the correspondence preserved.

The historical context

There are two decisive events connected with Sargon and the land round Der. At the time of his accession to the throne of Assyria the Babylonian throne was assumed by Merodach-baladan, "in Nisan 722, less than three months after Shalmaneser's death" (Brinkman, *Studies Oppenheim*, 12). In Merodach-baladan's 2nd year according to the Babylonian Chronicle Ummanigaš the king of Elam fought a battle with Sargon in the province of Der (*ina* NAM BĀD.AN^{ki}), and inflicted a major defeat on him.³ Merodach-baladan himself, with his army, went to assist the Elamite but failed to reach the battle. His complicity in the assault on Assyria is substantiated by Sargon's much later account of events.⁴ His narrative of his 12th year opens with a generalized retrospective account of Marduk-apla-iddina's hostile acts. This included an alliance with Elam, followed by persuading the Ru'a, the Hindaru, the land of Yadburu, the Puqudu, and "all the Suteans, people of the desert" to join an alliance against Assyria. A detailed chronology of these moves is not given, but Sargon tells us that in his 12th year he undertook to "cut the foot of the hostile Kaldæan from the land."

Merodach-baladan heard of his campaign, and "strengthened his forts and gathered his units" (Annals 265–66). "He made the Gambulu in its entirety enter Dūr-Abihara⁵ (267) / and he [...]ed Dūr-Abihara, and made the Gambulu living close to it enter it" (266a). He heightened the city-wall (269), and strengthened his guard for the passage of Sargon's campaign giving them 600 cavalry and 4000 reinforcement (*šūlātīrēšē*) soldiers (267–68). From the middle of the River Surappi they made a diversion (*butuqtu ibtuqūnim-ma*) and encircled its environs like a flood in full spate (270). Dūr-Abihara was taken by Sargon and renamed Dūr-Nabū. Subsequently Merodach-baladan (who was presumably pulling strings from a distance) tried to flee to the Elamite province of Yadburu, but was not allowed in and remained in Iqbi-Bēl on the Elamite frontier. Sargon returned northwards via the land of (A)rāši (see below), and then westwards into Babylonia. He is found in possession of Nippur in Ululu (month VI) 710 (Brinkman, *Studies Oppenheim*, 19 n. 100) and six months later attended the New Year ceremony in Babylon in Nisan (month I) 709. Later that year a second campaign against Merodach-baladan led to the capture of his capital and his flight into the marshes, but it is not until 707 that we learn that "Sargon returned from Babylon and the *sukkallu* and (other) magnates brought the spoil of Dūr-Yakin."⁶

It is obvious that the career of an Assyrian governor of the land of Der must have been deeply affected by both the Assyrian defeat in 720 and the reversal of fortune in 710, but the evidence for

² There is in fact one other possible attestation of this name, from Guzana (M. Jursa, "Il-iada'," *PNA* 2/1, 515b–16b), but only -*ja-da-a* is preserved, and other possibilities for the first part of this name could be entertained. See also n. 57 below.

³ See e.g. A.K. Grayson, "Problematical battles in Mesopotamian history," *Studies Landsberger*, 337–42.

⁴ Sargon's reconquest of Babylonia in 710 and 709 is described, for instance, by J.A. Brinkman, "Merodach-baladan II," *Studies Oppenheim*, 19–22, and the account presented in the Annals is considered in detail by Fuchs ("Rekonstruktion des Feldzuges im 12. Jahr nach dem Bericht der Annalen," Fuchs, *Khorsabad*, 399ff.).

⁵ This place is traditionally read Dūr-Athara but Dūr-Abihara in SAA, in the light of the personal name Abihara written AD/*a-bi--ḥa-ralīlu* (*PNA* 1/1, 9).

⁶ Millard, SAAS 2, 48 and 60, though *nāša* is not "carried off" but "brought."

how is sadly wanting. Surprisingly neither the Elamites nor the Kaldaeans seem to have taken advantage of Sargon's defeat in the field by annexing Der or its province. Historians have assumed that Der remained under Assyrian control throughout the decade. The texts do not state that the city itself changed hands, and the date of the final episode of VAS 1 no. 70 in Sargon's 11th year suggests that the city was still under Assyrian control before the campaign of 710. Moreover in that year, if we may trust Sargon's account, Merodach-baladan was busily fortifying a town on the Surappu, whose location though unknown was undoubtedly well south of Der. Sargon makes no mention of resistance further north than this.

If this is correct, it would not be surprising if Il-yada' is found still acting as the provincial governor in 710, and although the dossier of his correspondence does not explicitly confirm this, it equally does not contradict it. He must have held some kind of formally recognized post because (while we have no mention of his appointment) his dismissal is referred to: "when Il-yada' was sacked" (*pattûni* *ABL* no. 638:10). The letters make it clear that before he was sacked he still held post as a high official answerable directly to the king. He writes to "the king my lord" and refers to himself as "your servant." The king may write of visiting him ("until I come" *ABL* no. 503:10), or might be advised to summon him to the review (*ana māšarte* *ABL* no. 168 r. 13-14). He has administrative oversight of a considerable tract of land: he reports on "the land" (*mātu*: the word normally used by provincial governors to refer to their territory) and "fortresses" (*birâte*) of the king (*ABL* no. 503) and on the "district" (*nagî* *ABL* no. 503; *ABL* no. 608 r. 8, 10) of the king. He is charged with keeping watch: "stay alert for these two months, let your watch be strong until I arrive" (*ABL* no. 503:9, 12; cf. also *ABL* no. 883 r. 15-17, CT 53 no. 29 r. 5-7, CT 53 no. 5 r. 15-16). One may hesitate quite how to translate *mašartu*: is he being exhorted to maintain keen observation, or a strong military guard? As we should expect of an Assyrian provincial governor he certainly had troops and horses at his disposal (*ABL* no. 503), and was responsible for military provisions (*ABL* no. 883). Some of the troops were supplied by the central Assyrian military establishment, in the shape of Itu'aeans and Qurraean auxiliaries.⁷

At the same time he also sends reports on military matters which show that his brief does indeed include observation. As part of his watch, he reports to the king on enemy activities in Babylonia:

"A report on the son of Zērî: his forces are in Kish, he himself is residing in Babylon" (*ABL* no. 502 r. 12-14).⁸

"A report on [the son] of Yakin: he is in [Bab]ylon" (*ABL* no. 504:7-9).

"News of the son of Yakin: he is in Babylon" (*ABL* no. 1011+).

"Report on Marduk-apla-iddina: he is in his land" (*ABL* no. 503+).

These reports seem likely to come from the year or years immediately preceding Sargon's successful invasion of Babylonia, although one cannot rule out the possibility that they date further back, to the years between 720 and 710. A few major political events are alluded to in the correspondence, which might suggest a closer dating. In *ABL* no. 171 Nabû-bêlu-ka''in (on whom more below) reports his manoeuvres in response to information brought by Il-yada's messenger about a force of 3,000 troops. In *ABL* no. 503+ Il-yada' writes "since the king went to the enemy's land"; the phrasing, and what follows, suggest that the letter may have been written while Sargon was still on campaign, perhaps having left Il-yada' to "hold the fort" in his

⁷ *ABL* no. 883. Itu'aeans are also the subject of a message carried by envoy from Il-yada' to the author of CT 53 no. 332+.

⁸ The question of the identity of the "son of Zērî" (probably just another name for Merodach-baladan) is dealt with by Fuchs in SAA 15, XVff.

province as the army passed through to the south; obviously in that case the letter itself was brought back to the Assyrian capital after the campaign was completed.

ABL no. 883 reports on the activities of the magnates (LÚ.GAL.MEŠ), who are only likely to be in the area as part of a military campaign, and appear to have been constructing a fort while Il-yada' himself has been supplying them with food and equipment. The locality is called Minu', unfortunately unknown from other texts (except perhaps CT 53 no. 489), but their next task had to do with a water-course called *ia-Za-Bu* (not otherwise known) and the "mouths of Patti-Enlil." This canal is known to run eastwards from the Euphrates towards the Tigris north of Sippar and south of Dūr-Kurigalzi.⁹ At the end of the letter Il-yada' says "Afterwards I shall move on, (and) go to Dūr-Kurigalzi to (keep) my watch." Dūr-Kurigalzi is the northernmost Babylonian town west of the Tigris, and control of it would have been important in the event of an assault on Babylonia proper. Given the nature of the terrain due north (see below), the Assyrian-controlled territory east of the river would have been the obvious base for taking control of the region, so that it is not surprising to find Il-yada' given military responsibilities here, although it probably lay outside the borders of the province of Der itself.¹⁰

Non-military activities

One long letter from Il-yada' to Sargon (*ABL* no. 503+) deals with three different topics: military action and inaction, plans for the creation of a diversionary canal and the water level in the Diyala, with a concluding short report that "Merodach-baladan is in his land." Other letters mix military with broadly civilian matters, and if he was the provincial governor this is indeed what we should expect. He is involved on more than one occasion with groups of people crossing the Diyala at Mê-Turnat.¹¹ He acts as an intermediary between the king and a variety of people who seem to be in the Assyrian penumbra. Unfortunately it is hard to be sure in which direction people may have been moving, because Sargon himself of course moved around, and could already have been further south or west than Der on one phase or another of his Babylonian campaign. In *ABL* no. 608 Il-yada' is urging the king to receive a visiting dignitary called Ahu-nūri kindly, so that he will return and persuade "his countrymen and his brothers." In *ABL* no. 1011+ (name of author lost) he writes to the king about the envoy of Etēri, the *šatammu* (presumably of Gannate as in SAA 7 no. 58), and sends to the king, in the charge of his own envoy, a Kaldæan called Nabû-ušallim, who had something to do with an official (*šaknu*) at the unknown town of Nugul. In CT 53 no. 92 (name of writer lost) he reports on people bringing tribute (*maddattu*) of cattle and sheep: they had started out from Der, but then turned back for fear of an enemy attack; because they brought tribute they must have come from beyond the provincial frontiers in the direction of Elam, and since reference is made to the king coming to Mê-Turnat, he is probably further north, coming from Assyria proper. *ABL* no. 502 (Il-yada' to the king) is largely concerned with submitting people designated LÚ *i-su-qa-a-a* to an oath: these must have been representatives of a tribe or group (note "our brothers") on the margins of Assyrian territory whose loyalty Il-yada' was trying to secure. In the damaged letter *ABL* no. 1041 the writer reports comments from a group whose spokesman says "Let us ... (and) go to Il-yada'," though one of the group has apparently gone to Merodach-baladan in Babylon. On the

⁹ See S.W. Cole and H. Gasche, "Second- and First-Millennium BC Rivers in Northern Babylonia," in Gasche and Tanret, *Changing Watercourses*, 30–32.

¹⁰ The badly damaged mention of Dūr-Kurigalzi in CT 53 no. 5 probably belongs to the same episode. These two letters hardly suffice to designate Il-yada' as "governor of Dūr-Kurigalzi" (so S. Parpola, "Assyrian Royal Inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian Letters," in Fales, *ARIN*, 137), if only because there is no other evidence that this city was a provincial capital at the time.

¹¹ *ABL* no. 170 r. 7–9 together with Nabû-bēlu-ka'in (on whom see below); CT 53 no. 92 (tribute bringers); *ABL* no. 1041; probably also CT 53 no. 5.

reverse of the same tablet we hear of messengers being sent to the Tu³manaeans “residing among the Hadalla,” and someone returning from a visit to Issete (a long way north¹²), and there is a mention of the Diyala. Such passages illustrate a bustle of small-scale diplomacy to be expected as Assyrian territorial control interfaces with the complex human geography of the Der region.¹³

The geographical context

Whether as a lookout, a military guard, or a diplomatic intermediary Il-yada³'s service to Sargon was ordained by his geographical situation, to which we now turn. The city of Der is identified with the site of Tell ‘Aqar, a major mound described as 1 km square, lying about 1 km northwest of the modern town of Badra.¹⁴ By the time of Sargon it was of great antiquity, the cult centre of Ištaran, and undoubtedly owed its importance to its location on the route connecting Susa with Babylonia. It stands at a bottle-neck where both the principal route from Babylonia and that from the northwest and Assyria are funnelled between the outliers of the Zagros which delimit the plain on the east, and the marshy areas to the south, known today as Hor as-suwaiqiya and Hor ash-shubaicha. For both Babylonia and Assyria any assault on or from Susiana was almost obliged to pass by Der.

In the late 2nd millennium we hear that the Elamite king Kiten-Hutran attacked Babylonia, destroyed Der and its temple, Edimgalkalama, taking its population captive, and “eliminated the suzerainty of Enlil-nādin-šumi” (around 1226; Grayson, *Chronicles*, 176–77). Later however Der was back under Babylonian control, since Nebuchadnezzar I (1124–1103) launched a campaign against Elam from there (*BBS* no. 6). Thereafter most references in our texts to Der come from Assyrian sources. Direct Assyrian involvement in the affairs of Der can be summarized as follows:¹⁵

1. Adad-narari II: “I conquered the land of the city of Der in its entirety” (Grayson, *RIMA* 2, 148 A.0.99.2:28).
2. Eponym entry for 831: “Anu-rabû came from Der” (Millard, *SAAS* 2, 30).
- 3a. Eponym entry for 814: campaign “to Der”; “Anu-rabû went to Der” (Millard, *SAAS* 2, 32).
- 3b. The same event is described in Šamši-Adad V’s annals: “[I carried off] the deities Anu-rabû, Nanaya, Šarrat-Deri, Mar-bīti-who-is-in-front-of-the-House, Mar-bīti-who-is-between-the-river(-branches), Burruqu, Gula, Urkītu, Šukaniya [for

¹² Probably near Arbil, see G.B. Lanfranchi, “Assyrian geography and the Neo-Assyrian letters. The location of Īubuškia again,” in Liverani, *NA Geography*, 131ff.

¹³ There are perhaps hints that Il-yada³ was involved in deportations. He seems to be the subject of a verb *ú-sa-ga-* in CT 53 no. 332+. Deportations in this area might be reflected in ND 2803 ii 22 *ga-lit ša DUMU ba-da-[a]*. This is a large list of rations issued in Sargon’s reign to Assyrian officials for deportees from various places including Bīt-Daltā and Palestine (r. i 21, coll.). A person called Badā was active in our area (references in C. Ambros, “Bādāia,” *PNA* 1/2, 249–50, note Bāb-bitqi in *ABL* no. 893), sometimes associated with Aqar-bēl-lūmur, but we cannot of course be sure if this was the same person, and in any case the deportees are of “the son of Badā,” not Badā himself. (On Badā see also Parpola, *Fs Dietrich*, 566–68.)

¹⁴ B. Hrouda, “Ergebnisse einer Ruinenbesichtigung im südöstlichen Iraq,” *Bagh. Mitt.* 6 (1973): 7–18; for the modern Arabic name, possibly derived from the ancient name via Aramaic, see R. Zadok, “Syro-Palestinian Parallels to Lebanese Toponyms,” *BiOr* 33 (1976): 306.

¹⁵ This information naturally does little more than update the bibliography for the work of earlier commentators, e.g. E. Unger, “Dêr,” *RLA* 2, 199–201; A.R. Millard, “Another Babylonian chronicle text,” *Iraq* 26 (1964): 17–18.

Šimaliya?], Nēr-e-tagmil, Sakkud of the city Bubê — the gods who dwell in Der together with their property [.....]" (Grayson, *RIMA* 3, 190 A.O.103.2 iii 37–48).

- 3c. The Synchronistic History: "He [seized] Der, Lahīru, Gannanāte, Dūr-Papsukkal, Bīt-redūti, (and) Mē-Turan, the numerous cities of Karduniaš, together with their districts, their gods (and) their booty. He carried off Anu-rabū, Humhumya, Šarrat-Deri, Belit-Akkadi, Šimalya, Palil, Anunītu, (and) Mar-bīti of Maliki" (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 168 no. 21 iv 7–9).
4. Eponym entries for 795 and 794: "To Der" (Millard, *SAAS* 2, 35).
5. Eponym entry for 785: "Anu-rabū went to Der" (Millard, *SAAS* 2, 37).
6. It remains uncertain whether or not Tiglath-pileser mentions Der. In Tadmor's view URU.BĀD refers to it in which case he claims to have resettled 5400 people from there (Tadmor, *Tiglath-Pileser III*, 66–7:3–4) in the Amuq.¹⁶
7. In 720 the Babylonian Chronicle tells us that "Ummanigaš, king of Elam, made battle against Sargon, king of Assyria, in the province of Der" (*ina* NAM BĀD.AN^{ki} šaltum ana libbi Šarru-kīn šar māt Aššur ipuš-ma), and according to the Babylonian author, inflicted a heavy defeat on him (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 73 no. 1 i 33ff.).
8. Under Aššur-nādin-šumi (693) "Anu-rabū went from Der to Assyria" (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 128 no. 15:1).
- 9a. Esarhaddon: "I returned Anu-rabū, Šarrat-Deri, Nirah, Bēlet-balāṭi, Kurunītum, Sakkut of Bubê (and) Mār-bīti to Der, their city" (Borger, *Asarh.*, 84 r. 42–3; 74:20–21).
- 9b. Babylonian Chronicle: "Ištaran (dKA.DI) and the gods of Der went to Der" (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 82 no. 1 iii 44–5).
- 9c. Esarhaddon Chronicle: "Anu-rabū and the gods of De[r ...] Humhumya and Šimalya [...]" (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 125 no. 14:3–4).

Der's traditional and religious status

Der was emphatically a Babylonian city. To judge from the personal names in VAS 1 no. 70, the 8th century urban population of Der remained solidly (and perhaps self-consciously) Babylonian. Not just the officials, like the *šatammu* Saggil-dubbib, and Eṭēru the priest of Mār-

¹⁶ It seems doubtful whether we are entitled to take URU.BĀD in Ann. 13*, 3, as a writing for Der as assumed by Unger and accepted by Tadmor. One reason to accept it would be the "variant" URU Bīt-Dērāya cited from Ann 2, l. 2. However this is a rather shadowy variant, for more than one reason. The Layard copy (pl. II) which is the only witness leaves a palpable space before the sign to be read as É, and of the É only two verticals survive. Moreover, there are no parallels for the expression Bīt-Dērāya (except in the Uruk region, Zadok, *Rép. Géogr.* 8, 303–304), and although ll. 4–7 of the Layard copy run parallel to Ann 13*, there is no overlap in the surviving signs of ll. 1–3, so that one wonders if the composite text can really stand. If not, then the association of URU.BĀD with the "city of Amlate of the Damunu (tribe)," which is certainly in the Elamite frontier zone, is dissolved. One may therefore wonder whether Bīt-Dērāya is the correct reading: in this same part of the world we know of a tribe of Mandiraeans, attested in *ABL* no. 168 (r. 22), no. 1314 + CT 53 no. 77: LE 2 (see F.M. Fales, "New Assyrian letters from the Kuyunjik Collection," *Afo* 27 [1980]: 149), also in the Nimrud wine lists (Kinnier-Wilson, *Wine lists*, pl. 6 iii 9 and pl. 31:22).

bīti, but also the protagonists and the majority of the witnesses have patently Babylonian names, as do their fathers; those without filiation are identified by their professions which are predominantly urban such as smith, oil-presser, cook, temple brewer, diviner, and mayor.

It was an important religious centre. Nebuchadnezzar I called it the “cult-centre (*māḥaz*) of Anum,” and Šamši-Adad V a “great cult-centre” (*māḥazu rabâ*, RIMA 3, 190 A.O.103.2 iii 38’). It is listed by the Assyrians in the same breath as other major central Babylonian cities: in Sargon’s letter to Aššur-šarru-ušur mentioning Midas (SAA 1 no. 1) he refers to “the people of Aplāya, whether citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Kish, Nippur or Der.” Its ancient status is implicitly acknowledged by Sargon when he tells us that he relieved the population of Der of their carrying-baskets (*mušaššik tupšikkī Dēri*, Fuchs, *Khorsabad*, 32, Zyl. 5).

The chief deity of Der from at latest the mid-3rd millennium was Ištaran (written ^dKA.DI), and his temple had the Sumerian name, É-dim-gal-kalam-ma.¹⁷ Later the name of the city’s god seems to have become *Anu rabû*, “Anu-the-Great.”¹⁸ The passages cited above show that there were other gods at home in the city (Weidner, *Afo* 9 [1933–34]: 98–100), though they seem to have been particularly susceptible to transplantation at the hands of the Assyrians.¹⁹

The religious establishment at Der was probably led by the *šatammu*. He is named in SAA 7 no. 126 as Saggil-dubbib (receiving gold rings from the Assyrian establishment), and in SAA 7 no. 58. r. iii 23–4 (the name ending *jaya*) again receiving imperial baksheesh and in each case the title is “*šatammu* of Deri.” Gifts of this kind are made to the representatives of satellite states, and in these cases it underlines both the special status of Der and the role of the *šatammu* as the chief representative of the local community. At this time a *šatammu* is a “chief temple administrator ... of a particular temple *or city*” (*CAD* Š/2 188b, my italics), and the post at Der seems to be attached to the city, not to any one temple (unlike, e.g. Eanna or Ezida in Babylonia proper). Note in particular that in SAA 7 no. 58 the next listed recipient of imperial baksheesh is the *šatammu* of Gannanāti; his name is Eṭēru, and he is very likely the man of this name who is referred to as a *šatammu* in *ABL* no. 1011.²⁰

The Der region

Der is thus part of Babylonia, and the country to its north, at least as far as the Diyala, was perceived as Babylonian, as is plain from the accounts of earlier Assyrian kings. At the time of Šamši-Adad V’s campaigns the Assyrian armies were resisted at various fortified towns in this region, and his inscriptions indicate that the land of “Karduniaš” was seen to begin south of the

¹⁷ “House: The great post of the land.” In literary texts the image of a vertical post is frequently applied to a solidly founded building, and one is inclined to wonder whether this name is in some way related to the description of Der in the inscriptions of Šamši-Adad V as “whose foundations are founded like bedrock” (RIMA 3, 190 A.O.103.2 iii 39’ and 193 A.O.103.4:7’).

¹⁸ The correct reading of this god’s name is established by the Esarhaddon passage Borger, *Asarh.*, 74 l. 20: ^da-num GAL-ú, when compared with AN GAL in the parallel passage p. 84 l. 42. His effective identity with Ištaran (written ^dKA.DI) was asserted, no doubt correctly, by E.F. Weidner, “Die Feldzüge Šamši-Adads V. gegen Babylonien,” *Afo* 9 (1933–34): 99.

¹⁹ Quite why this was so is unclear to us. Elsewhere the transportation of Babylonian gods to Elam or Assyria was usually an inimical act of punishment, their return an act of reconciliation. Perhaps their removal was due to understandable tardiness of the Der administration in offering submission to Assyrian intruders.

²⁰ Note also Bēl-ibni, *šatammu* and 10 brothers (SAA 7 no. 57 iii 7’–8’), not *šatammu* of Dūr-Šarrukēn (pace *PNA* 1/2, 305), but there are too many Bēl-ibnis at this time for another identification. Šuma-iddin was *šatammu* of Der, perhaps in the reign of Aššur-bān-apli (*ABL* no. 412:14–15), see Frame, *Babylonia*, 274, who compares *ABL* no. 476 r. 13–14 where an unnamed *šatammu* and officials (*bēl piqittāte*) of Der are supposed to be working on the reconstruction of the temple (Parpola, SAA 10 no. 349; dated by Parpola to 671).

Diyala. In his 4th campaign, after receiving the submission of Mê-Turnat, which is known to be Tell Haddad on the right bank, he crossed the river and claims to have sacked "the town *Qar-ni-e*, his royal city" (RIMA 3, 187 A.0.103.1 iv 10). He also mentions towns called Di'bina, followed by Datebir and Izduia which are said to be "by the side of" (*ina ahi*) Gannanâte, and claims then to have captured Kiribtî-âlâni "their fortified city." The next episode was at Dür-Papsukkal, described as "a royal city which is situated like river-flats in the billows of water": here he mentions 13,000 warriors and describes his removal of the royal bed and throne and palace treasure from the city. The "he" of this account is apparently Marduk-balassu-iqbi, and in the final section of this text we discover that Dür-Papsukkal lies on the river Ṭaban.²¹

In the subsequent 5th campaign three places called *Qa-i-[x-]na*, Padnu and Makurrete are described as "three towns, his royal town" (RIMA 3, 190 A.0.103.2 iii 22').²² But these were not the only centres of resistance: having seen the Assyrian destroy these three, Marduk-balassu-iqbi repaired to Gannanâte, said to be fortified (URU *dan-nu-ti-šú*), and subsequently to Nēmetti-šarri. In the following 6th campaign the Babylonian ruler is Bābu-aha-iddina, and he is besieged and captured in his city of Ni[...] (RIMA 3, 191 A.0.103.2 iv 15'). This city is also on the south side of the river, and seems to have been another royal residence, since both a palace and Bābu-aha-iddina's family and treasure are mentioned.²³

The precise identification of these different places is impossible and largely immaterial, since it is clear that they all lay either on, or to the south of, the Diyala. It is curious that so many of them should have housed palaces and be described as "city of royalty," a phrase which would normally imply a capital city. This was already noted by Brinkman (*PKB*, n.1313), and it should be compared with the fact that a royal palace is also reported for Der (RIMA 3, 193 A.0.103.4:6'–20'). Although most of these towns are new to us, we have noted the possible antiquity of Padnu, and Dür-Papsukkal is already known from the 2nd millennium, when it was mentioned as a provincial capital (Nashef, *Bagh. Mitt.* 13 [1982]; Nashef, *Rép. Géogr.* 5, 97). The point is that the land immediately south of the Diyala sustained a number of prestigious towns, and even allowing for exaggeration the numbers of villages mentioned by Šamši-Adad make it clear the countryside was thickly settled.²⁴

This density of settlement is of course connected to the irrigation provided by the river. Some, but not all, of the cities recurring in the Assyrian campaign accounts stood more or less directly on one or both banks of the Diyala. Mê-Turnat (=Tell Haddad) is the obvious example. Northeast

²¹ Unfortunately there is no certainty about the location of Gannanâte, but the balance of probability now favours the region on the left bank of the Diyala, just southwest of the Jebel Hamrin (see K. Nashef, "Der Ṭaban-Fluss," *Bagh. Mitt.* 13 [1982]: 129 with n. 59).

²² For the dating of these campaigns see Brinkman, *PKB*, 208–10. As Weidner, *Afo* 9 (1933–34): 97 already pointed out Padnu is no doubt the earlier Padan. The exact phrasing of this line is curious: 3 URU.MEŠ-*ni* URU MAN-*ti-šú*. The implication is possibly that we have here a triple city, a cluster of three differentiated settlements which between them composed his "city of kingship." This seems a little more plausible than three quite distinct "cities of kingship" none of them known elsewhere. If they were near the shifting river (and they are mentioned directly after the crossing of the Turnat), it would increase the likelihood of two adjacent but differently named towns, such as Budapest. Moreover it may be worth raising the possibility that Makurrete is the plural of *makurru* "boat." Towns on rivers often have such names, cf. modern Iraqi Eski Kelek ("old raft") or Old Babylonian Emar ("donkey").

²³ For the idea that this might be an Assyrianizing version of Nēmetti-šarri (written *né-mat!-[]*) cf. J.N. Postgate, "The historical geography of the Hamrin basin," *Sumer* 40 (1984): 159.

²⁴ In his 4th campaign he mentions 200 villages in the environs of Qarnê (RIMA 3, 187 A.0.103.1 iv 10), 200 villages in the environs of Datebir and Izduya, beside Gannanâte (RIMA 3, 187 A.0.103.1 iv 15), and 447 villages whose inhabitants had entered Dür-Papsukkal (RIMA 3, 188 A.0.103.1 iv 26). In his 5th campaign 250 villages in the environs of Qai...na, Padnu and Makurrete (RIMA 3, 190 A.0.103.2 iii 22'), 245 (RIMA 3, 190 A.0.103.2 iii 35') or 256 (RIMA 3, 193 A.0.103.4:5') in the environs of Nēmetti-šarri. He also mentions 476 villages in the environs of Der (RIMA 3, 193 A.0.103.4:12' and 19'). Naturally these figures may not be accurate, but they must be accepted as evidence for a relatively densely settled landscape.

of the Jebel Hamrin the natural contours would have prevented canals from the left (and indeed the right) bank from watering any significant area outside the river's own flood plain (Stromoasis). In contrast, below the barrier of the Jebel Hamrin the plain permits irrigation from the Diyala, and its role in supplying the "Land behind Baghdad" with water is thoroughly explored in Adams, *Land behind Baghdad* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965). In the 2nd and 1st millennia a watercourse called the Ṭaban took off from the left bank of this stretch of the river and ran roughly due south, irrigating a significant strip of land east of and parallel to the Diyala (Nashef, *Bagh. Mitt.* 13 [1982]: 137). Today there is also an important watercourse called the Nahr al-Ruz leading south from the Diyala almost immediately after it emerges from the Jebel Hamrin. We have no information as to whether or not this is, or is the successor to, an ancient canal, but it seems probable that the opportunity offered would have been seized. If so, there is a possibility that this was the river Šanu (with the associated Ahšana), on which stood the town of Nēmetti-šarri which was important enough to find a mention alongside the Ṭaban in the lexical series Har-gud.²⁵

The routes from Assyria to Babylonia

Much of the importance of the province of Der must have derived from its pivotal position between Assyria and Babylonia. One route from Assyria to Babylonia involved marching down between the two main rivers to reach Babylonia in the vicinity of the old Kassite capital of Dūr-Kurigalzi. This route was described by Tukulti-Ninurta II (RIMA 2, 173–74 A.O.100.5:41–54) who started from Aššur and marched down the Wadi Tharthar. After passing through land held by the Utu' (=Itu'aeon) tribe along the west bank of the Tigris he spent 2 or 3 days lost in thickets before he reached Dūr-Kurigalzi. The army then crossed the Patti-Enlil canal before reaching Sippar. His account emphasises the difficulty of finding sweet water along this route, and on future occasions Assyrian kings normally kept to the left bank of the Tigris.

One reason for this is that from the reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II until late in Sargon's reign any Assyrian king launching a campaign against Babylonia is likely to have started not from Aššur but from Kalhu which was not only the principal royal residence but also home to the principal Review Palace (although Nineveh was also used occasionally as a starting point in the 9th century, cf. RIMA 3, 30 A.O.102.5 iv 5). Weidner wrote of the route taken by Šamši-Adad V that "Der Assyrische König zog nicht am Tigris entlang nach Babylonien, ..., sonder marschierte auf einem grossen Umweg durch das östliche Bergland" (*Afo* 9 [1933–34]: 96).²⁶ I believe this is a misconception: the direct route south, past Samarra, is (and probably was then) outside the limits of viable rainfall agriculture, and therefore largely lacking the permanent settlements which offered a degree of security for peaceable travellers, and a source of provisions for armies. On the other hand, a route which stayed well east of the Tigris, above (i.e. northeast of) the Jebel Hamrin, would have been in a settled countryside, and was probably the normal route to Babylonia, coming down on to the southern plains along the line of the Diyala.

In more detail, starting from Kalhu the Upper Zab could be crossed at Kasappa (MA Kaltappa, Tell Kushaf a few km above the confluence with the Tigris), from where one route must have gone to Kilizi (Qasr Shemamok) and thence, crossing the Lesser Zab perhaps at Turšan²⁷ in Middle Assyrian times, to Arrapha (Kerkuk). The higher road from Nineveh led to Arbil from

²⁵ For this toponym, and its mentions in annals and the eponym list, see Weidner, *Afo* 9 (1933–34): 94 and Nashef, *Bagh. Mitt.* 13 (1982): 130–31.

²⁶ A similar opinion à propos Sennacherib's route in Grayson, *Studies Landsberger*, 88 ("any Assyrian army making a campaign to the south or southeast would inevitably pass through Samarra").

²⁷ Sometimes placed at Altun Köprü (cf. Nashef, *Rép. Géogr.* 5, 266); however, the principal route to Arrapha seems more likely to have crossed some 10 km downstream from there, on the same southwestern side of the jebel as Kerkuk.

where one crossed the Lesser Zab at or near Altun Köprü (Sarē?), and then proceeded southeastwards, keeping to the east of the Kani Dolman range and its southward extension, which although not high provides a significant natural boundary running parallel to both the Jebel Hamrin and the first main Zagros fold (Qara Dagħ). We do not have regional surveys for this part of the country: in the late 2nd millennium there were canals, presumably taking off from the left bank of the Lesser Zab (as in the 20th century A.D.), and not only Arrapha but also Nuzi and Tell al-Fakhar to its west flourished, but if there were significant urban centres here in the 1st millennium their names are not known to us.

Somewhere south of Arrapha was the tract of land known as the Ugarsallu, discussed e.g. in Grayson, *Chronicles*, 264–65 and by Nashef in *Rép. Géogr.* 5, 270, and including the towns of Lubdu and Zabban. It remains uncertain whether it was above or below the Jebel Hamrin. Today the land southwest of this imposing and continuous range of rock is sparsely settled, but we have no archaeological survey for this region, and it is not known if the Adhaim was used for irrigation (cf. Mason, *Iraq and the Persian Gulf*, 73). The ancient name for this river in the 1st and 2nd millennia was Radānu, and in the 1st millennium at least this name also applied to its upper course (usually called today the Tauq Chai), as is clear from the itinerary K 4675+ (Levine, *SAAB* 3 [1989]: 75–92), where it appears in the district of Arzuhina (as also in NL 41 *Iraq* 20 [1958]: 187–88). Hence the agriculture mentioned along the river in the 2nd millennium (see references in Nashef, *Rép. Géogr.* 5, 314) could have been to the northeast of the Jebel Hamrin, and does not help us to place Ugarsallu one side of the jebel or the other. Unfortunately, this means that it is equally difficult to locate Lubdu and Zabban with confidence. All we can say is that the district of Zabban bordered the Diyala, either above or below the Jebel Hamrin, and that Lubdu probably lay further north, between Zabban and Arrapha.²⁸ This makes it difficult in what follows to pin down the routes between Assyria and the south where they approach the Diyala.

The Assyrian advances

Assyrian control north of the Diyala was firmly established only during the 9th century. Adad-narari II claims to have annexed Lubda and Arrapha which had till then been “fortresses of Karduniaš.” Under Aššur-nāšir-apli II the southern border of Assyria lay north of Zabban.²⁹ In his 8th campaign Shalmaneser III marched to Babylonia, going in turn to Zabban, Mē-Turnat and Gannanāte. The second and third were within Babylonian territory, although Zabban where he made offerings may have been within Assyrian control. The next year he visited the area again, attacking Lahīru and then Gannanāte. The transfer of the divine statue from Der to Assyria under Shalmaneser III in 831 need imply no more than a raid, rather than annexation, and if annexation was attempted it has lapsed by the time of Šamši-Adad’s incursion in 814.³⁰ Šamši-Adad V’s two campaigns in the area encountered stiff opposition when they reached the Diyala. Both kings tell us their campaigns were against “Karduniaš,” and it seems plain that the territory of Karduniaš, which is of course a Kassite name, was seen as reaching at least as far as the Diyala, which may indeed have been perceived explicitly as a frontier. Although Šamši-Adad describes reaching Der and plundering the city and its palace, removing the divine statues, he too does not claim to have annexed the area. If it had been definitively annexed, the campaigns of 795–753 would have been unnecessary. Unger may have been right to assume that the return of the statue of Anu-rabū in 785 implies that the city had been reinstated as a

²⁸ The land of Zamban is described as “on the bank of the Diyala” in a Middle Assyrian text (see Nashef, *Rép. Géogr.* 5, 280) although this need not imply that the town itself was on the river.

²⁹ Brinkman, *PKB*, 188; but note that as well as “upstream” *ellān* can just mean “above.”

³⁰ Under Marduk-balassu-iqbi there was a (Babylonian) *šakin iēmi* of Der (Brinkman, *PKB*, n. 1289).

provincial capital, and if so we should perhaps assume that Adad-nirari III's 795–793 campaigns had succeeded in annexing the city. However, according to the eponym list Aššur-dān had to campaign against Gannanāte in 771 and 767, which makes it unlikely Der was under Assyrian control then.

To sum up, although the Assyrian kings before Tiglath-pileser III seem frequently to have raided Der and interfered with its cult statues, there is little to suggest that they succeeded in placing Karduniaš south of the Diyala under direct rule, and their repeated visits to the area are puzzling. Possibly they were drawn by the prospect of valuable plunder, or anxious about Babylonian retaliation. Or perhaps they were concerned at an Elamite threat: although “it is not until the mid-eighth century that Akkadian and Elamite sources provide any significant information about the political situation” (Waters, SAAS 12, 4), Elam, along with Namri and Aramaeans, participated in Marduk-balassu-iqbi's stand against Šamši-Adad V near Dūr-Papsukkal (RIMA 3, 188 A.O.103.1 iv 38), and thus may well have been, or have been considered, a threat.

The provinces

Under Tiglath-pileser III the area probably came under Assyrian domination, and to reconstruct the role of Il-yada' we need to consider the division of the territory each side of the Diyala into provinces. The evidence is less than definite. The principal provincial capital north of the river was Arrapha (modern Kerkuk). Its province was probably delimited by the Lesser Zab to the northwest and the Jebel Tauq on the northeast.³¹ The southwestern and southeastern borders of Arrapha province remain quite uncertain. The traditional lists (as reflected in the *limmu* lists, Millard, SAAS 2) do not offer any provinces further south before the 7th century. Given the distances involved, one might expect a province between Arrapha and the Diyala, and certainly one south of the river if that region were under direct Assyrian administration. However, no governor or province of Der is mentioned before the reign of Shalmaneser V, and when Tiglath-pileser III annexed the area of the Puqudu, Lahīru of Idibirina, and the cities of Hilimmu and Pillutu, which are on the border of Elam and all south of Der, the whole area was entrusted to the Governor of Arrapha (Tadmor, *Tiglath-pileser III*, 161:13–14). This clearly indicates that an Assyrian province of Der did not exist at this stage, and that the governor controlled a huge swathe of land down the eastern fringe of Mesopotamia — from Kerkuk to Badra is 300 km.³²

As we have seen, under Shalmaneser V, in 724 Il-yada' is described in a formal legal document as the Governor of the land of Der. It seems necessary to conclude that at this date Der was an Assyrian provincial capital. In citation 7 above the Babylonian Chronicle's mention of the battle of Der does not mention the city as such, and the battle could therefore have been at some distance from it, provided it fell within the provincial boundaries. In the 7th century Der was certainly an Assyrian provincial capital, since Šulmu-bēli-lašme was “Governor of Der” when he held the eponymate under Esarhaddon in 670.³³ The easiest assumption is that Der remained the

³¹ J.N. Postgate, “Assyria: the home provinces,” in Liverani, *NA Geography*, 14–15. The provincial boundary is likely to have followed the line of the Jebel. Although Kerkuk nestles up against the southwest face of the Kani Dolman range (see the map *ibid.*, 14; not northeast of it, as shown by the other map *ibid.*, 15), it is obviously conceivable that its territory extended back through the pass, but it seems necessary to assign some if not all of this area to Arzuhina.

³² In his surviving inscriptions Tiglath-pileser says nothing of fighting in, nor of annexing, the Der region itself (except for a doubtful mention of deportees, see n. 16 above).

³³ Millard, SAAS 2, 122; RIMB 2, 274; because of the ambiguity of the signs GAR KUR it is impossible to say for sure whether “the land of Der” is meant, though this would be my preference.

capital of an Assyrian province during the intervening half century, but much happened during that time, and this assumption requires justification.³⁴

The boundaries of Der province can only be guessed, though with some plausibility. In the 8th and 7th centuries the indications are that, whether under Babylonian or Assyrian control, the city was very close to the frontier. As Mar-Issar explains to Esarhaddon in SAA 10 no. 349, "Der is on the border of another country" (*ina muḫḫi taḫūmu ša māti šanīti šū*). This will have been in a southeasterly direction: more strictly due south lay the Aramaean marsh territory of Gambulu, converted into a province by Sargon after his 710 campaign. The eastern limit will have been the first of the Zagros ranges, and in the north it is hard to imagine that the Diyala itself did not act as a frontier. To the west the situation is more complicated. The principal town in this region was surely Upi, classical Opis. Its location, much disputed in the past, now seems securely determined at the mounds of Mujaili'at, which were shown by the surveys of Adams to have stood on an earlier course of the Tigris, about 18 km downstream from its confluence with the Diyala (a location agreeing with the description of Herodotus).³⁵ It seems probable, although there is no proof, that it stood on the east bank of the river, but in any case Upi must have controlled a major crossing point. The letters of Il-yada' make it clear that the city, under its sheikh called Radmanu, fell within his sphere of influence (see below). However, we do not have any evidence that it was a provincial capital at any stage.

For another provincial capital we have to look to the town of Dūr-Šarrukku, a Babylonian town in existence long before Sargon II of Assyria founded his new capital in the province of Halahhu. In the 7th century it was probably the provincial seat of the eponyms for 672 and 664 (so Frame, *Babylonia*, 275).³⁶ In modern literature its location has been very uncertain, confusion resulting from a lexical equation with "Sippar-Aruru." In fact it was nowhere near Sippar proper, and its approximate location is given by two *kudurrus*. In *BBS* no. 24 it is mentioned next to Upi, and an 11th century *kudurru* found at the mounds of Mujaili'at and with the subscription "City of Upi," is concerned with lands in the territory of Dūr-Šarrukīn. The statement in *ABL* no. 503+ that the water in the Diyala is very high "and is going to Dūr-Šarrukku" serves to confirm that Dūr-Šarrukku must be sought east of the Tigris and north of Upi, presumably on or near the Diyala. The town is also within Il-yada's sphere of action, but there is no evidence that it was a provincial capital until the eponymate of Nabū-bēlu-ušur in 672. One contemporary of Il-yada' who seems to have a responsibility for this town is Aššur-bēlu-taqqin. In *ABL* no. 503+ Il-yada' proposes to summon him to join him in opening a diversionary canal (*mušašnitu*). They may therefore have held responsibilities each side of a river, and one possibility is that Dūr-Šarrukku lay on the west side of the Diyala,³⁷ and acted as capital of the triangle of land between the Diyala and the Tigris. An Aššur-bēlu-taqqin is also involved in arrangements for the adornment of divine statues of Šidada and Humhum in *ABL* no. 438.

³⁴ Note, for instance, that in *ABL* no. 868 we encounter a *qēpu* of Der, a post which would usually be held by the representative of the king beyond Assyria's formal frontiers, and not in a town already under a provincial governor. Perhaps at some point Il-yada' was not formally a Governor, or after his dismissal no successor to him as Governor was installed by Sargon, with Šamaš-bēlu-ušur acting only as *qēpu*; but other explanations could be advanced. (See now *qēpu* referring to Šamaš-bēlu-ušur in Parpola, *Fs Dietrich*, 561–63 obv. 9.)

³⁵ See J. Black, "Babylonian Textual Evidence," *NAPR* 1 (1987): 18–21; the site is today some 18 km ESE of the Diyala-Tigris confluence, and would have been about the same distance from the ancient meeting point reconstructed further to the NE.

³⁶ In some, if not all, cases Assyrian scribes differentiated the Babylonian city from their new capital by writing the end of the name *-ukkula*. It seems unlikely that the name of a ruling or recently deceased monarch could have been eroded down in this way in official documents, and there is no certain instance of this writing applied to the Assyrian city.

³⁷ By which of course is meant the Diyala as it was then, perhaps, following Adams, *Baghdad*, 35 with figs. 3 and 4, some 10 km west of the modern course.

Šidada is known as the deity of Dūr-Šarrukku (George, *House Most High*, nos. 269 and 1042), Humhum is mentioned by Esarhaddon in connection with Sippar-Aruru (equated with Dūr-Šarrukku in MSL 11): “I returned the deities Humhumia, Šuqamuna and Šimalia to Sippar-Aruru” (Borger, *Asarh.*, 84 r. 44).³⁸ Assuming this is the same person it seems likely he was made responsible for this area shortly after 710 and remained its governor into the reign of Esarhaddon (to which it is tempting to attribute *ABL* no. 438).

Lahīru was another late addition to the provincial system, and like Dūr-Šarrukku it also had a namesake which has led to some confusion, because modern commentators cannot agree whether it is one city or two. Brinkman opts for one (as did Postgate, *Sumer* 40 [1984]: 153), versus Forrer and more recently Fuchs for two, which is in our present view correct. One Lahīru was close to the Middle Diyala, probably north of the river: this is the easiest solution for the city mentioned in Šamši-Adad V’s campaigns, and is strongly supported by ND 2664 (*Iraq* 23 [1961]: 42) which reports on a satisfactory harvest in the towns of Kār-Aššur, Gan(a)nāti, Lahīri, Zaban, Dūr-Bēl-ilaya, Šarru-iqbi and KURarrua, concluding with a reference to Lubdu. The geographical context here is very clearly the Kerkuk corridor north of the Diyala, and light-years away from the other Lahīru. This was down south, in among the Aramaean tribes and probably east of the Tigris: it is Lahīru “of Idibirina” (Tadmor, *Tiglath-pileser III*, 160:13) or “of Yadibiri” (Sargon Annals 300). With Fuchs, *Khorsabad*, p. 444, this qualification is probably intended to distinguish the southern town from its more familiar northern namesake. Confirmation that the province of Lahīru is north of the Diyala is provided by SAA 13 no. 124 (*ABL* no. 558, 7th century), about a royal project for which logistical support was to be provided by the local governors, which virtually proves that the provinces of Lahīru and Dūr-Šarrukku were contiguous. Like Dūr-Šarrukku, it only appears as a province in the 7th century (Frame, *Babylonia*, 220; Frahm, *Sanherib*, 207–9).

One more province in this area seems to be mentioned in the letter *ABL* no. 32 (SAA 10 no. 24). This is dated by Parpola to 669, and mentions the governor (LÚ.EN.NAM) of the city of Šamaš-našir. As it happens, this same town is mentioned in *ABL* no. 168 by Nabû-bēlu-ka’ in (on whom see below) as the location of villages and fields which he denies having taken from Il-yada’. In this context it is parallel to the “province of Arrapha,” suggesting that already under Sargon the town of Šamaš-našir, although not a provincial capital, had some administrative status. *ABL* no. 32 suggests (but does not prove) that it was close to the route taken by the statue of Marduk on its journey from Aššur to Babylon, and is further confirmation that the “Diyala route” was often taken by travellers from the north destined for Babylonia.

To sum up, in the 7th century we have evidence for the provinces of Der and Dūr-Šarrukku in the region bounded by the Diyala, the Tigris, the southern marshes and the Zagros. The province of Lahīru was contiguous with that of Dūr-Šarrukku, but very likely north of the Diyala, and another province of “the town of Šamaš-našir” may have been adjacent to it. In the 8th century the only Assyrian province mentioned south of the Diyala was that of the land of Der. North of the river, the only province is Arrapha (despite the existence of the towns of Lubdu and Zabban). As we already noted, when Tiglath-pileser III campaigned against Hilimmu and Pillutu, south of Der, he placed these territories under the governor of Arrapha, but the province of Der must have been created later in his reign or shortly after Shalmaneser V’s accession, remained nominally in existence during the period 720–710, and was divided up some time after 710 into a

³⁸ This act is referred to after the repatriation of the gods of Der in the Babylonian chronicles or rather a combination of broken passages in the Babylonian Chronicle itself (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 82 no. 1 iii 44–46, mentions gods with lost names going to Dūr-Šarrukīn) and the Esarhaddon Chronicle (Grayson, *Chronicles*, 125 no. 14:3–4, city name lost but mention of Humhumia and Šimalia [and possibly another]). In *ABL* no. 339 (Parpola, SAA 10 no. 369) Mar-Išsar reports to Esarhaddon on the misappropriation of the property of Šimaliya and Humhum by the governor of Dūr-Šarrukku.

western (Dūr-Šarrukku) and an eastern province. When the province of Der was created, the southern boundary of the province of Arrapha was presumably fixed at the Diyala, and it seems plausible to suggest that Lahīru and Šamaš-našir provinces were created from its southern half at the same time as the subdivision of Der province. Since Lahīru was a province under Sennacherib, this would place the reorganization in his reign or in the last five years of Sargon's, but we cannot be more precise than that at present.

The internal character of the "land of Der"

The "land of Der" in 710 would thus have extended 150 km NW-SE and 110 km NE-SW, giving an area of some 16,500 sq. km. It must have been far from homogeneous. No intensive archaeological site surveys have been reported for this region, in part because of its sensitive position on a modern frontier, and we have no clear idea of how extensive the marshy areas would have been at different times.³⁹ Today the city itself is stuck out in inhospitable terrain on the present Iraq-Iran border. In the 1920s the land between the Tigris and the Iranian frontier had a population of between 2 and 4 persons per square kilometer, except for the district containing Badrah itself, which had a significant enclave of agricultural land, raising the figures to between 4 and 8.⁴⁰ There are a number of perennial wadis running off the Zagros, and although their waters do not reach the Tigris, combined with "a marked sweet-water spring-line"⁴¹ they do sustain a chain of settlements parallel to the jebel, along the line of the main northwest to southeast route.⁴² Of these the two principal towns are Badra itself, and Mandali in a similar location some 80 km to the north, both reputed for their date-groves.⁴³ Away from the main route there are, and were, few other major settlements in this region.

In antiquity also Der must have stood like a fortified island in the surrounding region, and it may be that its very name and its logogram reflect this. Any doubts about the inhospitability of the terrain can be dispelled by reading Nebuchadnezzar I's account of his march south from Der in *BBS* no. 6. Nevertheless, the Badra area itself cannot have been completely deserted. No doubt the waters of the Galal Badra would have been exploited in antiquity as today, since the *kudurru* VAS 1 no. 70 mentions date orchards in the city in the 8th century, as well as two water-courses, and Šamsi-Adad V writes of 476 villages in the region of Der. In *ABL* no. 1063 we learn that population of villages in the area had sought refuge from Elamite raiding in the city of Der. Here again surface survey combined with aerial images should reveal useful facts about the location of settlement.

Der as we have seen was a frontier town. The best information about what lay beyond this frontier comes from Sennacherib's Samarra inscription (Grayson, *AfO* 20 [1963]: 90 ll. 19-34). Here immediately south of Der Sennacherib tells us that he restored Assyrian control of two towns called Bīt-Ha'iri and Raz/šâ "cities of Assyrian territory which the king of Elam had taken by force in the time of my father" (*ibid.*, ll. 19-20). Bīt-Ha'iri does indeed feature in Sargon's correspondence (e.g. *ABL* no. 1335), and in *ABL* no. 1093 Nabû-dûru-ušur (see below)

³⁹ For survey in the Der region see B. Hrouda, "Ergebnisse einer Ruinenbesichtigung im südöstlichen Iraq," *Bagh. Mitt.* 6 (1973): 7-18, and for the Mandali region to the north J. Oates, "First Preliminary Report on a Survey in the Region of Mandali and Badra," *Sumer* 22 (1966): 51-60 and "Prehistoric investigations near Mandali, Iraq," *Iraq* 30 (1968): 1-20.

⁴⁰ Figures taken from a map prepared by the Royal Hungarian Cartographic Institute for a League of Nations Report on the "Question of the Frontier between Turkey and Iraq." An area of cultivation round Badra extending 30-40 km north-south is shown in Mason, *Iraq and the Persian Gulf*, 69 fig. 19.

⁴¹ Mason, *Iraq and the Persian Gulf*, 69.

⁴² As described in J. Oates, *Sumer* 22 (1966): 54-55 and *Iraq* 30 (1968): 1-2.

⁴³ Mason, *Iraq and the Persian Gulf*, 459.

activities in Babylonia proper. This was certainly the role of Radmanu, described as the sheikh (*nasiku*) of Upi (*ABL* no. 504:10–12). His function is made clear in *ABL* no. 608 (name of writer lost, but in all probability Il-yada') where he is described as determining and passing on the news of Sippar (although for some reason he cannot, or is not wanted to, continue doing so). Upi in the late 2nd millennium had a hinterland which included irrigated cultivation, as the two *kudurrus* mentioned demonstrate, but there must have been a large stretch of desert and perhaps also marsh in the 100 km which separated it from Der (terrain which in the 20th century A.D. was barren but often flooded desert, known as Haur ash-shubaicha), which would no doubt have hosted Aramaean groups from time to time. Another crossing point on the Tigris, Bāb-bitqi, was probably also within the Der region. As a guess, we might place it further north, at the approximate latitude of Baghdad, since some crossing point must have existed between the northern strip of Babylonia, round Dūr-Kurigalzi and the lands irrigated from the Diyala.⁴⁹

To sum up, *ethnically* the region was a patchwork. There are signs of the Kassite past, since Šimaliya, who was one of the two deities associated with the Kassite royal house, features in the temples of both Der and Dūr-Šarrukku. There was an abiding Babylonian component in the settled lands irrigated from the left bank of the Diyala, in the Der enclave, and even further southeast beyond the frontier in Rāši. Aramaeans probably controlled the remaining desert and marsh whenever there was a power vacuum.

Strategically, the Der region fulfilled two or three roles. It provided the bulwark against Elamite incursion from the southeast. It gave the Assyrians a foothold in the south from which the northern sector of Babylonia proper — from Dūr-Kurigalzi to Sippar — could be observed and contained, and it gave control of the route into Babylonia when the time came to make an incursion. In 710 Sargon came back northwards from the marshes via Rāši, obviously passing Der, before he crossed the Tigris and entered Babylonia proper to attack the Kaldæan capital at Dur-Ladinni.

*Nabû-bēlu-ka''in, (and?) the sukkallu*⁵⁰

Of the other officials with whom Il-yada' interacts Nabû-bēlu-ka''in is probably the most significant. In *ABL* no. 713 he writes, using the regular formula of a provincial governor, "The land of the king my lord is well," and this letter, like CT 53 no. 892 which probably also had the same phrase, is concerned with Median affairs. Two letters of Mannu-kī-Ninua indicate that in all probability Nabû-bēlu-ka''in preceded him as governor of Kār-Šarrukēn, formerly Harhar in Western Iran (Fuchs, SAA 15). When Mannu-kī-Ninua was governor after the death of Daltā of Ellipi in 708 (*ABL* no. 1454), he emphasises to the local city-lords that "just as Nabû-bēlu-ka''in protected you, I shall protect you" (*ABL* no. 129). Nabû-bēlu-ka''in could in fact have

⁴⁹ Bāb-bitqi is mentioned *ABL* no. 830:8 (crossing point used repeatedly by Son of Zērī; mention of Itu' and Rubu' might be taken to point to a northern location; *ABL* no. 542 r. 1 (NB); *ABL* no. 89 (Parpola, SAA 1 no. 94: the governor of Assur suggests switching a boat of his which is moored at Bāb-bitqi with a boat of the governor of Arrapha which is operating a ferry at Upi); *ABL* no. 893 r. 17 (letter from Badā, cf. n. 12 above); *ABL* no. 1312:11 (not helpful).

⁵⁰ Our entire discussion of the position of Nabû-bēlu-ka''in needs to be revised in the light of a fragmentary prism inscription from the Iraqi excavations at Tell Baradan, in which Nabû-bēlu-ka''in records his construction of the city-wall of Mē-Turnat, and bears the title governor of Arrapha (LÚ.GAR.KUR ^{um} ar-rap-*hi*). The conclusion must be that he succeeded Istar-dūri in this post, perhaps in 710 or 709, and that he was governor of Kār-Šarrukēn before this. It remains a possibility that he held the post of *sukkallu* concurrently with the governorship of Arrapha, but if so it is a little surprising that this title is not used in the Baradan inscription, and his post as governor of Arrapha is sufficient to account for his involvement in Babylonian affairs. The prism fragment will be published by Prof. K. Kessler, to whom we are very grateful for showing us his edition of the text and allowing us to cite this information.

been governor of the province since Kār-Šarrukēn was made an Assyrian province in Sargon's campaign of 716.

Curiously, though, Nabû-bēlu-ka''in's other correspondence seems to have little connection with Media. In *ABL* no. 168 he is found defending himself against an accusation that he has appropriated villages and fields belonging to Il-yada' in the province of Arrapha. Fuchs (*SAA* 15, XXXVIII) states that at one time Nabû-bēlu-ka''in "was responsible for the security of the area between modern Tauq (Lubda), Tell Haddad (Meturna) and the foot of the Zagros-mountains." Indeed he keeps watch in Lubda (*ABL* no. 810) and mentions Lubda and Zabban in *ABL* no. 1191. In *ABL* no. 171+ Il-yada' has sent an envoy to inform Nabû-bēlu-ka''in of the arrival of a force of 3,000 (presumably enemy) troops, and Nabû-bēlu-ka''in says that he will go as far as Zabban and Daduni⁵¹ and put troops on alert. In *ABL* no. 170 he reports to the king that he went with Il-yada' to Mē-Turnat to get some people across the river. In his letters he more than once mentions a town called Dūr-Bēl-ilaya which must have been close to the Jebel Hamrin north of the Diyala.⁵²

Although at first sight this cannot be part of his duties as governor of Kār-Šarrukēn, on reflection perhaps it is. Governors from other provinces were often called in to participate in important campaigns, and Sargon could easily have drawn on forces from Western Iran on his way to Der and Babylonia. Nabû-bēlu-ka''in's military dispositions in the area just north of the Diyala crossing could be seen in this light. However, some of his reports do read as though he was administering the area, rather than camping temporarily in advance of a campaign, and it seems conceivable that this region had been detached from the province of Arrapha to constitute the western end of the new province of Kār-Šarrukēn (but note footnote 50, above).⁵³ None of the towns with which he is associated (Lubdu, Zabban, Dūr-Bēl-ilaya) is known as a provincial capital, and Lahīru and Šamaš-našir provinces were not yet created, as we have seen. The Middle Diyala region controlled access both to the Khurasan Road, leading east through Namri on to the Iranian plateau, and southwards to Der and beyond. Hence if his territory stretched from the Hamrin as far as Kār-Šarrukēn it would explain why in *ABL* no. 169 he can both report that some persons (perhaps the Assyrian magnates) have entered Ellipi, and have connections by messenger with the *qēpu* of (A)rāši.⁵⁴

The Governor of Arrapha was Ištar-dūrī (*limmu* 714, *PNA* 2/1, 569–70). *ABL* no. 157 is a letter from him to Sargon reporting on the harvest, and passing on to the king complaints by Šamaš-bēlu-ušur writing from Der about the lack of inscriptions for the walls of a temple. Because Šamaš-bēlu-ušur and not Il-yada' is in charge at Der this letter is not likely to precede 710, and at least suggests that at this time the Governor of Arrapha Ištar-dūrī had a watching

⁵¹ Otherwise unknown, unless we might make a connection with the place *da-tu-na* listed after Dūr-Kurigalzi and Dūr-Šarrukku, and before Hudadu, in *MSL* 11, 54 l. 26.

⁵² This follows from *ABL* no. 455, where we hear that the author (whose name is unfortunately broken away though it may well have been Nabû-bēlu-ka''in himself) is stationed in "Dūr-Anunīti, between Mē-Turnat and Dūr-Bēl-ilaya at the foot of the mountain" (rev. 7–9). The mentions of this town in Nabû-bēlu-ka''in's letters are in *ABL* no. 170, *ABL* no. 1191 (agricultural news of D., Zabban, and Lubda), and probably also *ABL* no. 810. The general location is supported by ND 2664 (discussed above).

⁵³ Harhar should lie on the northern border of Ellipi (Levine, *Iran* 12 [1974]: 116–17), but how far east remains uncertain. It could well be at or near Shahabad where the Khurasan road crosses the Saimarreh, and as the crow flies this is closer to Mē-Turnat than Badra is.

⁵⁴ One of his informants on the southeast frontier was called Nabû-iqīša. He sends Nabû-bēlu-ka''in a report on Elam (*ABL* no. 1453+); in *ABL* no. 169 Nabû-bēlu-ka''in is instructed to forward a royal letter to Nabû-iqīša, who should forward a copy in turn to the *qēpu* of Araši; and also in *ABL* no. 170 he writes about a letter to be forwarded to Nabû-iqīša. This suggests Nabû-iqīša was either a direct subordinate of Nabû-bēlu-ka''in or just further down the line geographically. If his territorial base was not within the province of Der itself, perhaps it was Gambulu.

brief over the area as a whole.⁵⁵ We have already seen that in Media by 708 Nabû-bēlu-ka''in had been succeeded by Mannu-kī-Ninua, and this raises the possibility that in the game of musical chairs following Sargon's annexation of large areas of south Mesopotamia Nabû-bēlu-ka''in was redeployed to a new post.

It has been suggested that he may have been Sargon's *sukkallu* (see Mattila, SAAS 11, 91–2, citing Parpola). Although we have a number of letters addressed to this *sukkallu* his identity is concealed from us by the convention that letters written by an official will use his own name, without specifying his office, whereas letters written to a higher official use his title without a name (see the same problem with *ABL* no. 1093 below). There are several letters in Neo-Babylonian script and dialect addressed to the *sukkallu*, and concerned with the affairs of Babylonia, including the cities of Babylon, Borsippa and Sippar, and the tribal areas of Bit-Awukani and Puqudu (Mattila, SAAS 11, 97–8). Some or all of these show the *sukkallu* acting as the principal agent of Sargon prior to the king's arrival in Babylonia, and the Neo-Assyrian letter *ABL* no. 70 also shows him with responsibility for the south. In *ABL* no. 781 the *sukkallu* receives information from Uruk about Elamite manoeuvres and is advised to station forces in Der, and the eponym list for 707 states that the *sukkallu* and the magnates sacked Bīt-Yakin (Mattila, SAAS 11, 103–4). As summarized by Mattila (p. 99) “the repeated connections with Babylonia testify to the duties of the *sukkallu* in the area, but this was probably not arranged through the provincial system, but by sending the *sukkallu* to Babylonia as a representative of the king.”

This would agree with *ABL* no. 505, a letter from Il-yada' to the *sukkallu*, whom he calls “my lord,” indicating that he had a rank higher than Il-yada'. It concerns the “servants” of the *sukkallu*, one of whom holds office as NU.BĀNDA, surely a traditional Babylonian title, at Dūr-Šarrukku. In CT 53 no. 435 the *sukkallu* and Il-yada' are both mentioned, though in a seriously fragmentary context. The suggested change of post and rank provides sufficient explanation for the fact that Nabû-bēlu-ka''in's letters associate him with Media and the Diyala region, while except for the two associations with Il-yada' and the mention of Der in *ABL* no. 781 the *sukkallu* appears to be concerned with Babylonia proper. Until we can find a better candidate for the *sukkallu*, and an alternative new job for Nabû-bēlu-ka''in, identification of the two may stand as the most plausible solution (see footnote 50 above).

The position of Il-yada'

Il-yada''s letters to Sargon clearly date from a time when he still held a high administrative post in the region, but their date has to be established. The fact that they were found at Nineveh and not at Kalhu suggests that they post-date 710.⁵⁶ The most elegant solution is to assume that he still remained the Assyrian governor of Der, and that when in *ABL* no. 638 we read of his having been sacked (*pattûni*) it was from this office. In this case, we need to identify a successor, and the obvious candidate for this exists. As Brinkman observes “Šamaš-bēla-ušur was active in the city of Dēr, according to *ABL* no. 157:17f., no. 799:2ff., no. 800:2 ff.” (*Studies Oppenheim*, 13 n. 42). When Šamaš-bēla-ušur himself writes to the king, his opening formula reports that “it is well with Der and the Fort” (*ABL* nos. 799+1332+CT 53 no. 89; *ABL* no. 800; no doubt also *ABL* no. 1314+CT 53 no. 77, cf. Fales, *AfO* 27 [1980]: 149), echoing some of Il-yada''s own letters. From the Kouyunjik correspondence we also have a letter of a certain Nabû-dūru-ušur

⁵⁵ Note the involvement of the governor of Arrapha in *ABL* no. 89 (Parpola, SAA 1 no. 94), with his troops at Bāb-bitqi and a boat of his at Upi, but this must have been in the context of a campaign, when governors would be operating outside their own boundaries.

⁵⁶ This cannot of course be 100% certain, as a few Sargon letters from Kouyunjik can be shown to predate 710 (cf. Fuchs and Parpola, SAA 15, XXXVI).

(*ABL* no. 1093). He reports to “The Governor, my lord” that “it is well with Der and the Fort” in exactly the same terms as Šamaš-bēla-ušur reports to the king, and the obvious (though admittedly not the only conceivable) reconstruction is that this is the governor’s deputy reporting to his boss who was temporarily absent from the province. What this would imply is that there was indeed a governor of Der province at this time (though note n. 34), and the obvious candidate is Šamaš-bēla-ušur. However, he is surely also the eponym for the year 710, described as the governor of Arzuhina. His letters suggest that he wrote from Der, rather than Arzuhina, and although he could have been given responsibility for a recently annexed territory as a temporary extension of his provincial governorate, just as Tiglath-pileser placed the Aramaean tribes south of Der under the governor of Arrapha (see above), the distances involved make it more likely that he was simply moved from one province to the other. When this happened, we cannot be sure: no events in his letters are firmly datable, and we cannot rule out the possibility that he would have been transferred already during his eponymate if the situation so demanded, whether in the aftermath of Sargon’s Babylonian campaigns of 710–709, or to fill the vacancy created by the dismissal of Il-yada’, or indeed as a consequence of both.

Conclusions about Il-yada’

His Aramaic name makes it unlikely that Il-yada’ belonged to the established Babylonian citizenry of the city of Der itself, but given his association with the Der region it is possible that he belonged to one of the Aramaean groups present in the region. Note that in his campaign in Gambulu Sargon came across a “town of ¹*šam-si-ia-da-a*’,” indicating that personal names like his were at home in the region.⁵⁷ His reappearance in the Der district under two kings and very different circumstances could suggest that he was a local man, and this is perhaps supported by his ownership of villages and fields within the province of Arrapha and another district probably north of the Diyala (*ABL* no. 168).

It therefore seems a good possibility that Il-yada’ was a local dignitary, perhaps an Aramaean sheikh, who was selected by either Tiglath-pileser towards the end of his reign or by Shalmaneser V to act as governor of the newly formed province of Der on behalf of Assyria. This would be understandable: while the Babylonian residents of the city itself might well have ties with both Babylonia proper and Elam, and could hardly have been relied on to adopt a pro-Assyrian stance, they probably did not represent a serious military challenge to the Assyrian kings. The Aramaean tribes, on the other hand, were capable of causing trouble, as events in 720 showed, and the easiest way to neutralize them would have been to tap into the local political set-up and choose an influential sheikh, with the security of his local base from which to act as the Assyrian representative, plus standing among other tribes in the region. It is worth noting that we cannot be sure that either under Shalmaneser V or under Sargon Il-yada’ resided at Der itself, and he may well not have. In *ABL* no. 212 the writer explains to the king that “we do not know of those [people of Hazannu] whom they sold in the house of Il-yada’,” but there is no indication of where the “house” may have been, nor indeed any certainty that it was a single establishment rather than his family or even tribe. In any case, he is probably not numbered among the cadre of metropolitan Assyrian “eunuchs my governors” whom Sargon mentions in his inscriptions, and this may ultimately be part of the reason why he does not retain his post when Assyrian control of southern Mesopotamia is re-established.

⁵⁷ Fuchs, *Khorsabad*, 145 l. 279n; the final aleph is used explicitly by Brinkman, *PKB*, 272 as an indication that this name is Aramaean. There seems no need to transcribe *-ia-da-u* or *-ia-da-i* (Fuchs, *Khorsabad*, 145 and 414) as though it were an Akkadian noun.